

Conditions May Be Too Good For Natives To Take

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MERTZON — A large portion of the Shortgrass County is in better shape for this time of year than since Noah dry-docked his Ark. The hillsides have greened up, and any old cow or ewes would have to be mighty high-classed to scorn the lush pickings in the low spots.

The spirits of the people are keeping up with the grass. The individuals hanging out at the post office have lost their normal dry weather stoops and their faces have lost a full six inches in length. They remind you of a man who has broken the bank at Las Vegas or come upon an even greater windfall, like getting on the government payroll.

As might be expected, there are still a few seasoned Shortgrassers who realize this isn't the time for unrestrained rejoicing. These old sages know that one of the major faults of this land of unshaded sun is its custom of allowing a rancher to build up hope, only to fatten him up for a sharp letdown. Furthermore, these skeptics aren't prone to forget that the area is famous far and wide as one that traditionally pulls grandstand rains for the sole purpose of destroying well nourished cases of self pity.

In other words, the grey-snouted old whelps understand that every time a man gets to feeling so sorry for himself that the most sympathetic bartender who ever dried a tear with his bar rag couldn't console him, this fickle-climated country always responds by bringing on something to break the spell.

Hours could be spent telling tales about the time Old So-and So developed a case of worry over his personal misfortunes that would override what St. George told his wife after his tussle with the dragon. But the ending to these yarns would always be that at the precise moment when he was unable to carry his cross one more step, the cursed Shortgrass country would come up with a rain or wet snow to interfere with his agony.

The argument of these oldtimers is indisputable. Nevertheless, the main body of the populace continues to permit its spirits to vary according to ups and downs of the weather. Their minds become warped and re-warped, but they never seem to have enough foresight to remain on a stable course.

At this state it's impossible to evaluate precisely what the outcome will be. The livestock, I think, will profit by the rainfall. But it's never too early to tell how the natives will hold up under the strain of what could be the best autumn season the Shortgrass country has seen in ages.